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cultivation provides the opportunity. One fact, however, remains clear. Whatever the changes in its composition, the village remains first and foremost a kinship unit, of which the majority of the inhabitants are directly connected with the headman himself. Even in the communities built in the Kasama area, where natives chiefly assemble for the purpose of looking for white employment, it is still considered unusual to join a community unless some kind of relationship with the headman or some other influential member of the village can be established,[1] although of course, in this case the kinship groups are breaking into smaller and smaller units and the structure of the community is much less closely knit.

The principles of local association among the Bemba are two in number—the rule of primary matrilocal marriage and that of matrilineal descent. The first is the predominant factor in fixing residence, and the nucleus of a Bemba village is a matrilocal extended family composed of the headman, his married daughters, their husbands, and the latter's children. But each man is legally identified with his mother's lineage group and belongs to her clan. He is heir to his maternal grandfather, or maternal uncle, and may therefore leave his wife's village to succeed to an office among his mother's people. In any case, he has the right to remove his family to his matrilineal lineage group after some years of married life. He is the legal guardian of his sister and her children, subject to the rights of his sister's husband,[2] and hence may have to support her if her husband dies or deserts her. If his rank is high, or he has achieved a headmanship, he will find that male and female members of his lineage group will want to come and live with him, wherever they may have contracted a marriage. So that there are many occasions when the matrilocal family grouping breaks down and residence

[1] One of the few regular prostitutes in the Kasama area, who wanted to build herself a hut in a village near the town to follow her profession there, felt it necessary to trace a relationship to the headman in order to establish her right to do so. The kinship was fictitious, but, as the natives said in explanation, 'She kept giving the headman presents and saying she was his sister's daughter until he said: "All right. Build a hut over there." ' It was interesting that even an emancipated woman of this type apparently considered it essential to claim and occupy a recognized position in the local kinship group.

[2] There is a very even balance between the powers of the father and the maternal uncle nowadays—cf. my *Mother-right among the Central Bantu*. Essays presented to C. G. Seligman, 1934.

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621 591 611 is determined by matrilineal descent, or even in some cases by patrilineal ties, as we shall see. So that we have to deal with a primary principle of local association—matrilocal marriage and a number of secondary ones.

The Primary Group—the Matrilocal Extended Family.[1]

596 842 [591] By the rule of matrilocal marriage a man goes to live at his wife's village and works there for his father-in-law for a number of years. Thus, the aim of each man is to have as many daughters as possible since their marriage makes him head of a strong economic unit composed of his daughters, his sons-in-law, and their children. The more daughters a Bemba has the more fortunate he is considered to be. His sons leave him to go and live in their father-in-law's villages and become economically dependent on their wives' families. They move from home at betrothal (i.e. about 12 to 14 years) and remain in the village into which they have married until two or three children have been born. Even if they remove their families home later in married life it is more likely that they will go to their maternal grandfather or maternal uncle, than to their father. But a man's daughters, when they marry, build huts near his own, and if their husbands settle down happily in their wives' community, they remain there more or less permanently and form the backbone of their father-in-law's village, if he is a headman. Hence the Bemba proverb, 'A man is a granary on the veranda (i.e. a man acknowledging economic obligations but living far off) and a daughter is a granary by the door-way (i.e. a source of economic support near at hand).'[2]

596 603 Besides the advantage of the presence of his sons-in-law, a Bemba father looks forward to the arrival of grandchildren. With these he is on very intimate terms. As children they sleep in his hut and he and the grandmother play an important part in their education. In early married life the granddaughters will probably remain in his village if their parents are still resident there, and grandchildren of both sexes are welcome to return there later in life whenever they please. The children of a man's daughters are considered a very special asset, whereas the children of his sons, though treated with equal affection, usually live elsewhere. To

[1] Matrilocal marriage is still practised but its duration is gradually decreasing.
[2] *Mwaume butala pa lukungu: mwanakashi butala pa muinshi.*

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Introduction

The chisungu of the Bemba is usually described either as a puberty rite for girls or as a female initiation ceremony. It consists of a long and rather elaborate succession of ritual acts which includes miming, singing, dancing and the handling of sacred emblems. In the old days the chisungu invariably preceded the marriage of a young girl, and was an integral part of the series of ceremonies by which a bridegroom was united to the family group of his bride, in a tribe in which descent is reckoned through the woman and not through the man, and in which a man comes to live with his wife's relatives at marriage rather than a woman with her husband's.

Ceremonies similar to the chisungu have been reported from other matrilineal areas of Central Africa. They exist, for instance amongst the tribes most akin to the Bemba, such as the Bisa, Lamba and the Kaonde, as well as amongst the Cewa and the Yao of Nyasaland. They have also been reported from the North-western Province of Northern Rhodesia in the country inhabited by the Ila, the Tonga and the Sala. They occur here and there in the Belgian Congo and Angola.[1] In spite of the wide distribution of these ceremonies however we have, as yet, no full description of any one of them, nor any detailed analysis of the function they appear to fulfil. It would be true to say that, in general, puberty ritual for girls has received rather scant attention in comparison with the very full treatment which has been accorded to the various initiation ceremonies practised for boys.

Puberty ritual sets complex problems for the anthropologist. It celebrates the attainment of sex maturity in the boy or the girl, and hence the physical possibility of parenthood. Naturally enough, it reflects tribal attitudes to sex, fertility, marriage and the rearing of children, and expresses, and tries to enforce, the

[1] See Appendix A.

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769 living. It also emphasizes the magical powers associated with sex
831 which is linked with feelings of guilt and anxiety expressed in the taboos clustered round marriage, childbirth and the rearing of children. This feeling of guilt is so widely diffused that innocent
[783] people are thought to suffer from the magical results of a sex misdemeanour committed by someone else.

581 These beliefs support the institution of marriage since safety
789 from magical danger is acquired by means of a ceremony which can
837 only be carried out by a man's head wife. No Bemba supposes that a husband will be kept from adultery by this means, but the legal wife is the only person who can secure him and those near him from the resultant punishment.

622 The reader is asked to bear in mind, without attempting further
372 analysis, the association that exists in Bemba ideology between
831 chieftainship, fire, sex and power to influence the fertility of the
789 land and its people, and to remember that these powers are hurt
753 by blood, intercourse out of marriage, death, murder, lion-killing and all cold, terrible or 'bad things' (*fibi*). Fertility which is so much desired is produced by conduct pleasing to the ancestors, and to senior and especially paternal relatives, the blessings of persons in authority and the carrying out of the ritual of marriage. Illness is inflicted usually on the innocent party, by sex relations out of marriage without ritual purification, by bad conduct, and because of injury to people who, since they have died in a state of righteous indignation, will 'come back' to haunt the family which did them wrong.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

642 The most characteristic features of the Bemba social structure
●611 are its hierarchical and authoritarian type of government, of which
591 the apex is a paramount chief believed to have supernatural powers; and its system of matrilineal descent with uxorilocal marriage.

643 The political structure of the Bemba is a centralized one. Its unity under a single head, the *Citimukulu*, was achieved, in 1931 at any rate, because of a belief in the spiritual powers the king was

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622 There was no permanent property to bind a man to one area rather than another and men moved easily to live with one relative or another. The headman's prime difficulty was in fact to persuade relatives to join him or if they had already done so to persuade these kinsmen not to leave him!

The headman could command small gifts in tribute and a little service. He also had a shrine to his own personal ancestors and performed ceremonies for the good of the village. He purified the village by an act of ritual intercourse with his chief wife and his fire was regarded as the fire of the village.

644 Princesses had an important part to play in the political system. The mother of the Citimukulu was known as the Candamukulu and she ruled over a small territory in the king's district and was thus in the position of sub-chief to him. The same was true of another royal princess, the Mukukamfumu who also had a sub-chieftainship in her own right. Both these princesses had important ritual functions to perform in tribal ceremonies.

614 173 The Bemba are organised in matrilineal clans distinguished by totemic observances, stereotyped forms of greeting between clan members, joking relationships with paired and opposite clans,[1] and honorific titles. Clan members reckon descent from a common ancestress and her brother, and they tell the legendary tale of the first arrival of these forebears in the country. They remember the villages where their ancestors first settled, although neither the clan nor any of its subdivisions can be regarded as localized groups at the present day. Clans are ranked in some kind of precedence, according to the order in which their ancestors are thought to have arrived in the country from the west.

611 769 Within the clan great emphasis is laid on the principle of matrilineal descent. Ancestors are remembered in prayers before the shrine of a head of a family. Here a man will pray to the spirit of his maternal grandfather or maternal uncle, if the latter is already dead. The spirit of a maternal ancestor is thought to quicken the child in its mother's womb and to protect it all its life. The name of this ancestor or ancestress is discovered by [553] divination, and given to the child. When a man dies his name, his

[1] See my 'Reciprocal clan relationships among the Bemba of North-Eastern Rhodesia', in *Man*, vol. XXXVII, 1937.

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Social Structure

When a man dies his name, his kinship duties and his hereditary bow are passed on to his sister's son or to her grandson through a daughter. The heir actually becomes the dead man in a social sense: he adopts the kinship terms the latter used, calling, for instance, 'maternal nephew' the person he would previously have called 'brother'. The same positional succession takes place in the matrilineal line for women, and a dead woman will be replaced by her sister or a maternal granddaughter. In this system women are honoured as the bearers of many children and such a woman is said to found a house.

In the case of the royal crocodile clan the maintenance of descent is even more important. All senior chieftainships in Lubemba, the country of the Bemba, are held by members of the royal lineage.

A successor to such a chieftainship has access to 'great spirits', those of his dead predecessors, and he not only prays to them at the sacred shrines in his capital, but he acquires supernatural powers in his own person, so that he can bless and curse. His good health and vitality bring blessings to the community, and his ill-health or death, the reverse.

Princesses have the special duty to bear fine children in order to provide the country with chiefs, and they are honoured for doing so. The spirits of royal women are mentioned in prayer in tender and grateful terms as 'those who carried us in skins on their backs and gave us suck'. The first ancestress, Bwalya Cabala, is buried in a grove which is one of the most sacred places in Lubemba.[1]

Bemba clans are not segmentary. The effective kinship group within the clan is a three or four generation group, the men and women who trace their descent to a common great-grandmother and who remember a village of origin (*cifulo*). These are not corporate matrilineages in any territorial sense. The kinship system makes for a great deal of movement from village to village during a man's or a woman's life. The villages themselves change in composition and move from place to place following the shifting cultivation.

There appear to be no fixed leaders of the matrilineage, except in the case of the royal dynasty, but this group is the unit of succession to the offices and the names of dead men and women and to their ancestral spirits.

[1] Cf. *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 387.

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labour of the younger generation—of particular importance. There may also be a correlation between fertility rites and matrilineal descent and in fact such a correlation seems to hold good in Central Africa (see Appendix A). Bemba believe that the child is entirely formed from the physical contribution of the mother and not the father, and similar beliefs may hold in the other matrilineal tribes in the area. It is moreover common to find in primitive society that the woman is regarded as solely responsible for the failure of a couple to produce children. Impotence in man is recognized but not sterility. In patrilineal Bantu societies it is common practice for the man's agnatic kinsmen to provide bride-wealth for him to secure him a wife. If she proves barren the cattle or other objects are commonly returned or another girl provided from the same lineage group. In a matrilineal society of the Bemba type the situation is rather different. The children of a marriage belong legally to the girl's family and it is to their gain if she produces children. This fact may account for the great care and attention given to fertility rites for girls among such people. The correlation of matrilineal descent with an emphasis on fertility is a hypothesis which will have to be tested more carefully in other areas. It would, of course be possible to relate the high infantile mortality rate that exists among the Bemba to their desire for children and their anxiety over them. This is in fact what many Bemba do. I have for instance been told in answer to a challenging question of mine about the protective rites performed for children. 'Well! Just look what a lot of our children die'. However, high infantile mortality rates are too common in Bantu society for this to be more than a contributory cause to the desire for fertility.

The salient features of Bemba social structure are also reflected in this ritual. The characteristic attitudes to authority in this very hierarchical society are expressed in ceremonies by which chiefs are created and maintained in their supernatural powers, and in those economic and other ceremonies performed by the chiefs themselves. The chisungu is not specially concerned with political life although some of the pottery emblems 'teach' the girl to honour the chiefs.

However, the hierarchy based on age, which is also characteristic of every type of structured relationship among the Bemba, is

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one of those which is frequently symbolized in the chisungu by the offering of food in order of age; by acts of obeisance to seniors; by the singing over and over again of the song about the immutability of precedence based on age, which runs 'The arm-pit cannot be higher than the shoulder'. The girl's proper conduct is expressed in the phrase 'be submissive, or make yourself soft and pliant before your elders' (*ukunakila kubakalamba*).

There is in fact a greater expression of the principle of precedence by age in the chisungu than in the chiefly rites themselves. This may be due to the fact that all rites of role assumption naturally give importance to age since it is those who have already assumed the senior role who can hand it on to the juniors. It is also true that Bemba girls are not removed from their own family to be put under the control of their mothers-in-law as in a patrilineal society, but they are placed under the authority of different older women in their own and other villages. Some of these are related to the girls and some are not. It must be remembered too that the chisungu is a public ceremony given over to teaching while most of the chiefly rites are done in secret and people merely assume that they have been correctly carried out.

Turning now to the social groups based on descent, it is worth noting that there is very little ritual expression of clan or lineage unity in the chisungu in spite of the fact that it deals with marriage and procreation. The principle of matrilineal descent is very strongly held here in spite of the domestic authority the father manages to win, which is greater than that reported from other matrilineal peoples in the area such as the Yao. The dogma as to the nature of biological descent was never questioned during my visit or the belief that the woman was responsible for the production of the child.[1] Exogamy rules within the clan are carefully kept, and clan greetings used. Yet although in some Bantu societies clan and lineage precedence is expressed in first-fruit ceremonies and members of different clans sit apart in clearly marked groups at tribal rites, in Lubemba there is no ritual ex-

[1] I quote in my article on the Bemba in *African Political Systems* edited by E. E. Evans-Pritchard and M. Fortes, 1939, (p. 97) an amazed comment made by a patrilineal Ngoni about Bemba beliefs on the subject: 'If I have a bag and put money in it, the money belongs to me. But the Bemba say a man puts semen into a woman and yet the children belong to the woman, not to the man.'

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match the ritual hostility between the sexes shown in some other initiation or marriage rites.[1]

Traces of hostility are revealed in the man's attitude to the chisungu. At least one Bemba man told me that unless the rites were performed 'our wives will hate us and give us no respect'. I have also heard remarks from women which seem to show that they are anxious lest they alienate the husbands attracted to the matrilineage. For instance, girls are instructed not to cry out in childbirth 'because it is a thing of shame. These are the secret things of women. Because the man will hear and will say "It is I who gave her that belly. I am ashamed because other women don't cry out like that".'

To conclude, Bemba evidence supports the suggestion that there is a connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies which emphasize the importance of fertility. In any society in which it is believed that women provide all the physical substance from which the foetus is formed, this would be natural; it is the case in Bemba society. Moreover, the connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies has been observed in a number of other African communities.[2]

I have suggested that there are also other possible associations, between matriliny characterized by absence of marriage payment, for instance, and instability of marriage with anxieties and taboos centring round the beginning of married life. A further association is suggested between matriliny combined with uxorilocal marriage, and initial inferiority of the young husband combined with compensating honours given him in the rituals of marriage or initiation. I have also suggested, very tentatively indeed, that in this particular matrilineal society there may be a connection between the lack of open hostility between the sexes and an unconscious feeling of guilt at robbing the man of his children, which is expressed in fears on the part of the women that the men will leave them, and on the part of the men that their wives will not respect them unless taught to do so by the chisungu.

[1] Cf. M. Gluckman, 'The role of the sexes in the Wiko circumcision ceremonies', in *Social Structure* edited by M. Fortes, 1949, and P. Mayer, 'Privileged obstruction of marriage rites among the Gusii', in a paper read to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1950.

[2] See Appendix A for a further discussion on this point.

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performed in the case of Yao boys' and girls' rites, and miming is generally common in the ceremonies.

One similarity of form noted in these abbreviated accounts is in the rites in which the girls are brought to the base of a named forest tree; this occurs among the Bemba, the Lamba, the Lunda of Angola and those of Jadotville. A log of a tree is brought into the hut among the Makonde, and another special feature is the search for pots of beer which occurs among the Bemba and the Nyanja.

The ceremony of shooting an arrow at a mark which takes place on the last night of the Bemba chisungu, and the giving of an arrow to the bridegroom at the Bemba wedding is paralleled among the Alungu, and in the Tumbuka-Kamanga country where an arrow is shot at a tree. Makonde ceremonies also use the bow as an important symbol. The bow appears to represent the stretching of the vagina in some cases; the bow and arrow are also used to represent the hunting or searching for the bride; the possession of the arrow seems to symbolize the husband's possession of the bride.

Since most of the tribes recorded are of Lunda origin, it is not surprising that there are similarities in the symbols used in the rites.

It is not possible to answer all the questions I asked as to the possible connections between chisungu rites on the one hand and matrilineal structure, marriage by service and uxorilocal residence on the other; nor those between chisungu as practised by the Bemba and the existence of ritual chiefs who can approach the ancestral spirits only after intercourse in marriage and ritual purification. The evidence on which to test these hypotheses is simply not available.

Suffice it to say that the correlation between girls' individual puberty rites and matrilineal organization is very marked in Central Africa, and that both the glorification of the role of the nubile girl and the praise of the man from another clan who gives her fertility, are consonant with the beliefs on which matrilineal organization rests in this area.[1] Boys' ceremonies exist side by side

[1] The only patrilineal tribe which I remember in this area which has individual puberty rites for girls and none for boys is the Nyakusa. Cf. G. H. Wilson, No. 44, p. 238.

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Appendix A

with girls' among the peoples of Mozambique origin as they do on the coast from which the Yao, Makua and Makonde come, but the girls' rites are not mere replicas of the boys' but are definitely a series of nubility ceremonies starting with puberty and ending with the celebration of pregnancy and childbirth. The coincidence between matriliny and agricultural activities which was postulated by some of the earlier evolutionary writers, such as Bachofen and Schmidt, exists here in actual fact.

This correlation has probably little bearing on the chisungu, except that in this area the introduction of stock has usually been followed by the giving of cattle as a marriage payment for the bride and hence the bridegroom's acquisition of rights over his children, and his achievement of the equally important right of virilocal residence. Where the high marriage payments are made, as in Angola or in parts of Nyasaland, the Bemba matrilineal, uxorilocal marriage by service pattern, which I have tried to associate with girls' fertility ceremonies, tends to disappear.

I cannot test the validity of the correlation I tried to suggest between the importance of the Bemba chisungu and an ancestral cult mainly carried out by chiefs. The evidence is not full enough on this point. Nevertheless it is worth pointing out that the Bemba are the only people in this group with ritual kingship and a centralised government developed into key institutions of the whole tribal structure, and the Bemba ceremonies are more complex than those of any of the other tribes mentioned. The rites among Kazembe's Lunda may be found to be as complex, but on the present evidence, the Bemba are the only other tribe in the group which has, or had, a 'divine' king, chiefs with ritual powers, matrilineal descent and uxorilocal marriage. From the evidence at present available the ceremonies that come next in order of complexity are those of the Yao. Here there is no 'divine king' or centralised organization, but the strength of the matrilineage and the emphasis on matrilineal descent as a basis of residence seems to be stronger than in the other tribes in the area, judging from Mitchell's evidence. The other questions I have asked throughout this book must await their answers when the field evidence is fuller.

widely reputed for their iron-working, when during the recent war tools became scarce. It is rarely found among the Bemba. Village smiths able to reforge and sharpen axe-blades and hoes are, however, common all over the area. The Unga obtained iron blades for their fish-spears from the Wakulu. 325

Wood-carving, highly developed among the Congo peoples, is limited among the Bemba to the simplest geometric designs, but Von Rosen noted some elaborate and rather striking carving among the Twa.(1) Weaving is unknown among the Bemba, and is not reported elsewhere. Baskets are generally made well but are not elaborate. For a fishing group the Unga have little variety in baskets and these again are simply made. A certain amount of leather-work is made by the Bemba. Both cooking and eating pots are made all over the plateau, but although they are well made they tend to be badly fired and hence to be fragile. 322 286 285 281 323

Salt-making flourishes particularly among the Shila and Taiwa, around Lake Mweru.(2) It is highly lucrative, compensates for the comparative infertility of the soil and provides a lively marketing activity. The salt is obtained by straining the soil through baskets and boiling the resultant brine. The salt-earth supply in the area is permanent and this tends to have a stabilizing effect upon villages, which would otherwise move frequently in accordance with the practice of shifting cultivation. The natural salt found in the pans at Mpika in Bemba country was also utilized and highly valued, being traded around the country to gratify the longing for salt in which the Bemba diet is singularly lacking. 317

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP

(a) *Matrilineal Descent* is one of the cultural characteristics of this area. Amongst all these people affiliation is traced through the mother and a man belongs to his mother's clan. Succession is within a loosely organised matrilineage of narrow span whereby a man is succeeded by his younger brothers or by his sisters' sons, or by his sisters' daughters' sons. These rules govern succession to chieftainship, to a headmanship, or to the name and status of a dead man by the practice known in this area as *ukupyamika*.(3) A woman usually succeeds to the name of her maternal grandmother and, in the case of a chieftainess, she succeeds to the title itself. Succession to a name is associated with the power to call on the ancestral spirits of the dead man or woman in question. 611

All the peoples described appear to be organised into matrilineal clans with totemic names. Among the Bemba, for instance, there are 40 or more such dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. The clan claims descent from an original ancestress, a more or less legendary figure dating from the time of the first occupation of their present territory by the Bemba. Clan centres, in the sense of original villages of occupation, are remembered but 614

(1) Von Rosen, 1916. (2) Moore 1937.
(3) Richards, 9, 1950, describes this as 'positional succession'.

girl has no fire-place of her own when she marries, and remains a member of her mother's cooking-group, even as a young married woman. This extended family group is not a joint household in the sense of a compound surrounded by a wall, or a homestead or kraal separated from other houses by some form of hedge, but a group of households which cooperate even though the huts in which they live may be scattered through the village. When a married man with children wins the right to remove his family to his own village, it is a unit of this kind which usually moves with him. Richards describes the delight of a Bemba man in the birth of daughters who will attract sons to the village and build up a group of this kind. In fact, although a woman's children belong to her clan and must submit ultimately to the authority of her brother, who could, in the old days, sell them into slavery, the father nevertheless acquires considerable authority over his wife and children in a stable marriage. When the children are small they obey him; when the daughters marry they stay at first under his rule; and even the sons who go elsewhere to marry, remember their father, give him presents and may even join him later in preference to living with their mother's brother. Children also take their father's name, although they belong to their mother's clan, and some "sons of the chief" are given minor chieftainships as well as the royal princes - the sisters' sons of the chief. Richards emphasizes the extent to which authority is divided between the father and the mother's brother in this area, with a tendency for the power of the father to increase under modern conditions.(1)

Richards states that the avunculate is stronger at the present day among the Bisa. It is not quite clear whether this is a structural difference or due to the fact that the Bisa are, on the whole, less in contact with European civilisation. Little is known of this aspect of kinship among the Aushi and Unga. There seems, however, to be a marked contrast between the position of the father and mother's brother among the Bemba and among the Cewa and Yao to the east, where the avunculate is again much more strongly developed and there seems to be some form of corporate matrilinage.(2)

It will be seen that as regards residence and common activities the effective kinship unit is not one based on unilineal descent, as is common among the patrilineal, patrilocal Bantu, but a loosely organised group of kinsfolk composed of near relatives on both sides of the family. The Bemba call this group a *lupwa*.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

The bilateral character of Bemba kinship ties is reflected in the system of nomenclature. It will be found that in one's own generation, where there is the maximum distinction in terminology, a man uses the term *munyinaw* for his own brothers and for parallel cousins, male and female, on his father's and his mother's side. Only his own sister is called by a special term, *nkashi*. A woman in the same way uses the sibling term for her own sister and for her parallel cousins, male and female, but uses a special term, *mulume*, for her own brother. No marriage is possible between a man and any woman who is a *munyina* on the maternal or paternal side. A special term *mufyale* is used by men and women for their cross-cousins, i.e. either for the father's

(1) Richards, 1, 1934 and 9, 1950. (2) Tew, 1950, pp. 11, 43.

131 towards the Luapula and, in several respects, markedly differing from the surrounding plateau country.

226 The abundance of fish in the Luapula, which is free from rapids and easily navigable below Johnston Falls near the mouth of the Luongo, makes fishing an important economic pursuit in which virtually all the adult male population participate and to which are attached elaborate ritual observances. (see below p.94) [4139] Besides being an important item in the native diet, fish constitutes the chief trading asset of the country.

134 241 On the plateau, where soils are poorer and the population is almost exclusively dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, the shifting *citemene* system of cultivation is the rule. In the valley, however, the rich alluvial deposits make possible a semi-permanent mound cultivation; this removes the necessity for changing village sites periodically and results in a greater stability. Cassava, of little account on the plateau, where finger millet and Kaffir corn predominate, is the staple food crop in the valley.

186 Common traditions accumulated over two centuries, during which the valley constituted the core of Kazembe's kingdom, have made the population conscious and proud of its past.

● 611 The patrilineal reckoning of descent introduced and established by the Lunda, as well as their tribal heterogeneity, mark the valley peoples off from the matrilineal and ethnically homogeneous neighbouring tribes: the Shila-Katya (north west), Shila (north), Lungu, Chishinga (east), Mukulo, Aushi (south), Lamba (south-west), and Lamotwa (west).

631 The Kazembe is now Paramount over the western (Northern Rhodesia) side of the valley, ruling directly in the province surrounding his capital. His kingdom is divided into eight chiefdoms, ruled by the following chiefs (from Lake Mweru southward): Kambwali, Kanyembo, Kazembe himself, Lukwesa, Lulamba, Kashiba, Mulundu, and Katuta. Sub-chiefs Muyembe and Kapesa administer two districts carved out of the metropolitan chiefdom but cannot hold courts. Lubunda, Mulundu, Katuta and Kapesa are of Chishinga extraction, the others are Lunda.

Kilwa island, with its Swahili chief Nshimba, now falls outside the Kazembe's kingdom.

TRIBAL MIXTURE

166 619 As a result of piecemeal settlement and frequent inter-marriage the component tribal groups are as a rule distributed over the whole territory. Local concentrations occur nevertheless: the Shila and Tabwa predominate in the extreme north, the Lungu in the Mulele district, the Chishinga in the Mununshi valley. A Bemba colony occupies land between Lake Mofwe and Lake Mweru granted to Mwamumkupa in return for the assistance given by his brother Mwaba, a Bemba chief, in opposing the invading Bayeke and re-establishing the fugitive Kazembe. On Kilwa island the descendants of Swahili slavers and Nyamwezi copper traders live alongside the aboriginal Shila.

The bulk of the population is made up of the Shila, Lunda, Chishinga,

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Luapula Peoples

87

The fifty or so clans represented in the valley are part of a fairly uniform clan system which extends over the territories inhabited by the Bemba-, Luba- and Lamba-speaking peoples. The *Bena Mumbo* (Clay clan) have their *ntulo* at Matanda in the upper valley of the Luapula, those of the *Bakosa* (Millipede clan) and the *Bena Mbushi* (Goat clan) are on the Lualaba; that of the *Bena Mfula* (Rain clan) is in the forest of Ngumbo on Lake Bangweulu. Originally, it is vaguely believed, all came from Kola (Angola?) 614

The *cikota* or *cisaka* is a segment of the clan, no longer localised, whose members gather to discuss *milandu* cases and to make decisions in matters of inheritance and succession. 613

Cikolwe ("big cock") is a term used to denote a common ancestor. It can be applied to the head, alive or dead, of a matrilineal descent group of any size, but usually refers to the ancestor or ancestress who broke away from the clan and led his extended family and followers from their clan *ntulo* to the valley.

Clan membership is not rigidly determined; it is usual to belong to one's mother's clan but it is possible to claim membership of any of the clans to which one's grandparents belonged. The descendants of the Lunda of Musta Yamvo remain patrilineal. The Luba from the Lualaba, who joined the Lunda and became Lundaised, were previously matrilineal. 611 614

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION AND SETTLEMENT

Villages were originally founded by the immigrant groups under the leadership of *fikolwe* (sing. *cikolwe*) many of whom were women. The nucleus of each group was formed by a single matrilineal descent group, *cikota*. In spite of inter-marriage and increasing spatial mobility, which tend to obliterate the original connection between the territorial and the kinship structure, villages are still identified by outsiders with their founding clans. 621

Village headmanship remains in the *cikota*. The headman succeeds to the office, the name, the wives, and the insignia (belt and gun or spear) of his predecessor. He has the charge of *nshipa*, the village medicine. A village is divided into wards, *fitente* (sing. *citente*), in which the households of close relatives are grouped together. [624]

Most of the old village sites in the *dambos* of the Luapula tributaries are now derelict. With the coming of the Pax Britannica and the development of cash sales of fish the villages moved closer to the river edge and now extend along the trunk road. New villages recognised by the government must number at least fifteen tax-payers. The average size of villages is 150-200 inhabitants. The capital has a population of 3,000.(1) 361 621

Formerly the huts were circular, grass-roofed, woven bamboo structures,(2) scattered amidst cassava plantations.(3) Nowadays the villages are more 342 361

1) The capital is usually referred to as Kazembe. It was moved south after the Yeke invasion. The old site is part of the territory settled by the Lunda after they had assisted Kazembe against the Yeke. The new site was previously known as Mwansabombwe.
2) Valdez, II, p.249; Burton, p.46. (3) Livingstone, I, p.248.

622 influence and upon the discretionary alterations of descent, and they always
645 come back again on to the main line, at least as regards the royal clan, after any short dash up a side line that has been made necessary by influence or by politics.

121 Government at the moment cannot follow all these threads, and at least once in the past an enquiry had to be held to disentangle them. This was in 1924 and I understand that it took Mr. Willis, the Provincial Commissioner, Kasama, nearly nine months to collect the evidence and give a ruling as to who should be Chitimukulu VIII. The object of this paper then is to provide an administrative guide not only to what should happen normally, but also to point out moves that contain the germs of future complications. I deal very fully with the principles of succession so that when the present holders of chieftainships are dead the traditional rules expounded here can still be consulted. I also point out tendencies that might simplify and stabilise the succession to the Paramountcy if the Superior Native Authority ever come to consider such objectives. Finally I indicate which are traditionally the least important of the chieftainships, as this has a bearing on the present Government policy of encouraging the abolition of redundant posts.

643 There is not one direct line of promotion through all Bemba chieftainships culminating in the Paramountcy, but there are several distinct branches even in the royal lines, and some of them are not usually connected by way of interchange of personnel. Some branches of the royal clan are for practical purposes complete in themselves, but there are others which are connected one with the other. No wonder the system is involved.

622 There are at the moment of writing 32 Bemba chiefs acknowledged by Government, and most of them are subject to change and promotion along one of the several branches of chieftainship.

• 611
622 Descent and succession are matrilineal. The totem of the Paramount and other chiefs descended from sisters of Paramounts is the crocodile, and these men are known as *Mfwisang'andu* (sing). I refer to them simply as the royal Chiefs. But some of the most materially important chieftainships of to-day are not held by *Besang'andu* (plural) and there are grown-up men of royal blood working on the mines and elsewhere who will never hold a Bemba chieftainship. The fact of belonging to the royal clan makes a man eligible for a chieftainship, but whether he gets one depends upon whether he is born of a senior royal sister. For there never were enough chieftainships to go round all the clan. I use the word sister frequently as a matter of convenience but the word mother represents the ultimate test. A man takes his seniority from his mother, consequently in a large clan it is only the sons of senior *nsenfumu* (mothers of chiefs) who can expect to get a chieftainship.

By senior I mean genealogically *senior*: that is, relative nearness to the mothers on the main vertical line to the left of the table and then closeness of position along the horizontal line of brothers and cousins of the same generation.

This point will become clearer as we go on. Succession is traced from *nsenfumu* to *nsenfumu* and the order of precedence is the order of the mother. The sons of a senior *nsenfumu* are senior to those of a junior *nsenfumu* although the sons of the latter may be older in years. The various branches of the clan each start with a woman whose brothers are royal

chiefs, hence my use of the word sister to define a branch of the clan. It is essential to stress that the words senior and junior refer to the genealogical position of the sister or *namfumu* and to her closeness to the earlier mothers and sisters. The word sister is particularly apt as the succession of the *namfumu* is from sister to sister when possible or to a classificatory sister, i.e., first cousin. 611 622

For the benefit of scholars I would insist before going on that this is not a complete history of Bemba chieftainship. I try to deal only with present day successions and I insert only sufficient recent history to explain why certain moves were made, or in order to indicate what should happen in the future. A minimum of tribal history is necessary to prove certain points. 121

Section 1.—THE PARAMOUNTCY.

000 In order to understand fully the principles involved it will be necessary to give a brief history of succession and also to discuss in some detail the relative positions of the mothers of chiefs. But first, a few introductory remarks will indicate the general and traditional ideas on how the succession works.

611 643 644 Inheritance is matrilineal throughout: the most senior son of the most senior mother becoming Paramount Chief Chitimukulu. The mothers bear traditional names such as Chandamukulu and Mukukamfumu, as in the reigning lineage at present. Sometimes Chandamukulu is the elder, and sometimes the other.

At the moment of writing the eldest of three *namfumu* (mothers of chiefs) is called Chandamukulu, the second is Mukukamfumu and a third is Mushimba. Seniority in sons follows that of the mother. The sons of junior sisters have reached to the Paramountcy on several occasions in the past but only when the inheritance has first passed through the sons of senior sisters. The post of Paramount went three times in succession to sons of junior, second sisters, and Nkula D14 of the present day always asserts that this altered the rule, and he states his intention to follow this up with his own claim when Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1 dies. But, as I shall show, it is a futile claim and is not supported by traditional rules.

The Paramountcy passes through all the sons of the eldest sister before passing on to the sons of the next sisters. There is also a definite insistence that all the sons of sisters of the same generation must be passed through before the line switches to a younger generation of any branch of the family. The one generation may include half-brothers as well as cousins. Nkolemfumu D6 and Mpepo D10 are half-brothers from different fathers.

Thus it was possible in the past and may be possible in the distant future, if this custom is strictly maintained, for sons of junior sisters to become Paramount again.

The above sounds complicated but all it means is that the Bemba genealogical tree as regards succession to the Paramountcy is read horizontally from left to right across the branches of the royal clan. (I shall discuss later whether such reading should stop with the last offspring of any two branches, or go right across to include the offspring of three or more sisters.) Such tables are made out with the members of the same generation all along one line and normally it is easy to see who is in the succession or not. It passes from brother to brother in a genealogical generation and when that horizontal line is exhausted it drops to the oldest nephew of the senior woman in the next generation. Then it moves across that generation.

(a) History of Succession.

643 173 The genealogical table begins not with the earliest Bemba history, but at a distinct break in succession that occurred in the early 19th Century. I wish to commence this history at that point. Earlier history, from the

[see pp. 44-50 – Analyst]

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(b) The common language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring *Cibisa* or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, and take delight in describing the military exploits of their ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines his succession to different offices and his status in the community, although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan (*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line. Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting. Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank —if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena ŋandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the *imikoa* are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual

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based on descent in nearly every case. Chieftainships were limited to one clan, as we have seen; some of the councillorships (i.e. the *bakabilo*) are confined to a few of the older clans; and headmanships, though they may be won through the chiefs favour, tend to become hereditary in their turn. All priestly offices are hereditary without exception, as is natural where an ancestral cult of this type is practised. Magico-economic specialists, particularly those in charge of fishing villages, usually acquire their powers by descent also, as do some of the doctors and diviners (*yanga*). In each case the supernatural powers almost invariably correlated with political authority in this area are conferred by a rite, of great complexity, in the case of the succession of a chief, known as *ukupyanika*. For these reasons it is essential to study the dogma of descent by which these powers are believed to be transferred from one generation to another, and the legal rules of succession by which status and office are passed from one man to another.

(*a*) *The Dogma of Descent*. By dogma of descent I mean, first, those theories of procreation[1] which express a people's beliefs as to the physical contribution of the father and mother to the formation of the child, and hence the traditional conception of the physical continuity between one generation and the next; and next their beliefs as to the influence of the dead members of each social group over the living, and hence the social identification[2] of a man with the line of his dead ancestors.

Among the Bemba it is believed that a child is made from the blood of a woman which she is able to transmit to her male and female children. A man can possess this blood in his veins, but cannot pass it on to his children, who belong to a different clan. Physiological paternity is recognized. Children are often described as being like their fathers, and are expected to give the latter affection and respect although they have no legal obligations to them under the matrilineal system. 'We take our fathers' presents because they begot us,' they say. But it is nevertheless the physical

[1] This term was first introduced by Malinowski, who showed how the rules of matrilineal descent among the Trobriand islanders are buttressed by beliefs that the father makes no physical contribution to the birth of his child. Similar material published by Rattray from the Ashanti area shows a belief in a double contribution of blood from the mother and spirit from the father correlated with a bilateral emphasis on descent.

[2] To use a term employed in a very stimulating manner by Radcliffe Browne.

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continuity of the mother's line of ancestors which is the basis of legal identification with her descent group.[1] A royal princess might even produce an heir by a slave father in the old days without lowering her child's prestige. The relationship between brother and sister, which is a very close one, legally and ritually, is based on the fact that the two were born from one womb, and in the case of the royal family it appears to be equally strong when the two are children of different fathers. These theories of procreation account, not only for the matrilineal descent of the Bemba, on which succession to chieftainship is based, but also for the rank accorded to the royal princesses as mothers of chiefs, and the headmanships and other positions of authority given them.

The Bemba dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living is also of the utmost importance as a basis for political authority. The spirit of a dead man (*umupashi*, plur. *imipashi*) is thought to survive as a guardian presence associated with the land or village site formerly inhabited, and as a spiritual protector of different individuals born in the same lineage group and called by the same name. The *imipashi* of dead chiefs become tutelary deities of the land they ruled over, and responsible for its fertility and the welfare of its inhabitants. They can be approached by the successor to the chieftainship at various sacred spots in the territory and at the sacred relic shrines (*babenye*) in his own village. A chief is said to be powerful because he 'has great *imipashi*!' It is for this reason he is described as the *umwine calo*, 'owner of the land', and it is important to note that in every case the most important *imipashi* and the most sacred relics are those of the first chiefs to enter the land, or the first occupants of a chieftainship.

This dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living inhabitants of a district, or the members of a descent group, is very similar to the general Bantu pattern. But the Bemba belief in the social identification between the dead man and his appointed successor seems to me to be particularly complete. It is the basis of the belief as to the supernatural influence exerted by the chief in his own person as distinct from his direct approach to the spirits

[1] The patrilineal tribes on the Nyassaland border consider the Bemba theory of procreation as entirely ridiculous. One Ngoni expressed his contempt, thus: 'If I have a bag and put money in it, the money belongs to me and not to the bag. But the Bemba say a man puts semen into a woman and yet the child belongs to her and not to him!'

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food, and to protect his person and that of the sacred relics from the contagion of illness, death, or sex defilement.[1]

The ritual by which a successor to the chieftainship is converted from an ordinary individual to a ruler with almost divine powers, has a good deal of political importance. It confers authority on the priests—in this case hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) who carry it out—and gives them, as we shall see, considerable power to check the chief himself. The complete ritual by which the *umupashi* of a dead ruler is liberated to guard the land he governed, and the new heir is installed, is too complex to describe here and now. Briefly speaking, it consists of the desiccation of the body during a period of a year, from one kafir-corn harvest to the next; its burial in a special grove (with human sacrifices in the old days); and the building of a shrine on the site of the deserted capital. To make the new chief, *bakabilo* must preside at the installation of a new great wife, arrange for the sexual purification of the royal pair, and the lighting of their new sacred fire.[2] They must hand over to the heir the heirlooms (*babenye*) of which they have been in charge during the interregnum, and must finally found a new village and build again the sacred huts in which the relics are to be kept. Such a ceremonial may take eighteen months to two years and the participation of all the *bakabilo* and hereditary buriers (*bafingo*) in the case of the paramount; a lesser time and very many fewer priestly dignitaries in the case of the territorial chiefs. The secrecy and awe surrounding these ceremonies is, I believe, one of the ways by which the people's reverence for their chiefs is maintained.

(*b*) *Legal Rules of Descent and Succession.* Against this background of beliefs as to the continuity between one generation and another, the nature of descent and succession is defined exactly by legal rule. Descent in the royal family is reckoned to the time of first occupation of the country, and twenty-five to thirty Citimukulus are remembered. In the case of a territorial chief, the line of ancestors is not so long, and most are described as having been 'born in the country'. Most of the names honoured are those of men but some are those of women, and it seems that

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xvii.

[2] Hence the importance of the great wife of the chief (*umukolo ua calo*) in the political life of the tribe and the belief that her behaviour also influences the welfare of the land.

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611 622 643 the first ancestress to inhabit a new chiefdom, or one who was a mother of numerous powerful sons and was thus able to found a new branch, could claim to be so respected.[1] But it is to the men holders of titles that most shrines are built.

[645] [767] The hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) also trace their descent to the first arrival for the most part, and tell stories which account for their right to the ritual offices they hold to-day, e.g. the *bafingo* who now bury the chief, claim to be the descendants of those who buried the first Citimukulus when on the march. This reckoning of descent to a definite epoch in history very clearly remembered is of service in maintaining the myth of absolute continuity of the chiefly lines. In actual fact, the present Citimukulu is a descendant of one Cileshye, who seized the throne from the occupier, Cincinta, only four generations back. This branch of usurpers is able to claim descent from the first Citimukulu all the same. The first ancestors are remembered very accurately and their sacred relics kept. The ensuing vagueness in the chain seems to be of no account.

602 622 In most types of succession whether to the name and spirit of a dead man or to his office, there are usually two or three potential heirs, and although there are certain rules of priority, it is practically never the case that there is one child known as heir to the chieftainship from birth and brought up as such, as occurs in those South African tribes in which the eldest son of the great wife must always succeed. A Bemba chief, or commoner, is succeeded by his brothers in order of age, next by his sister's children, and, failing them, by his maternal grandsons. Difficulties arise when there is a choice between an older classificatory 'brother', not a sibling, but possibly a mother's sister's son, or an even more distant 'brother' still, and a young man, a maternal nephew who is the child of the deceased's own sister, with whom, as we have seen, his ties are very close. Here the principles of primogeniture conflict with that of propinquity of kinship, in the case of a branch of a family that has been in existence for three or four generations, and it is probable that in these cases the nearest heir is appointed unless he is manifestly unsuitable, when the more distant 'brother'

[1] e.g. Bwalya Cabala, the first ancestress said to have been fetched from Lubaland by her brothers when the latter had occupied what is now Bembaland; or the Nakasafye, grandmother of the present Nkula, who is described as having started a new line, and was evidently a woman of great character as well as the mother of many sons.